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ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING
OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Letter dated 14 August 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a memorandum regarding the relocation of the Republic of Belarus to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232 of 1 March 1989 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 132.

(Signed) Alexander SYCHOU
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Memorandum dated 28 June 1995 regarding the relocation of Belarus to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232

In 1973, the Republic of Belarus, then one of the 15 Republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and a Member of the United Nations, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973, was assigned to group (b) in the composition of the groups of Member States for the apportionment of the cost of peace-keeping operations. At that time, this step was taken for political and ideological reasons. This placement of Belarus has remained unchanged to date, in spite of repeated attempts over more than three years to resolve the problem of obvious discrepancies in the assignment of countries to groups and the fact that all the newly independent countries were placed in group (c) after the splitting up of the former USSR.

In the case of Belarus the problem of outstanding contributions for peace-keeping operations has taken on a particularly acute, and it would not be exaggerated to say, offensive character, primarily owing to the fact that the original motives for assigning Belarus to group (b) have become historically obsolete, its legal status under international law has changed and its economic situation has greatly deteriorated. This became particularly evident in the decrease in the production levels of all major economic sectors and, in turn, the decline in the standard of living.

Belarus must almost singlehandedly bear the enormous burden of expenditure to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the largest of its kind in the history of mankind. The cost of destroying weapons under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe increases daily, as does the cost of dismantling and removing nuclear weapons from Belarus according to the START I Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol. Adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State party has also imposed on the Government of Belarus substantial new expenses. These factors have together led to a serious and constant decline in the solvency of Belarus, and unfortunately there is no basis to assume that the current situation will improve in the near future. Moreover, it has been aggravated by the unjustified decision adopted at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to increase by more than one and a half the contribution of Belarus to the regular budget of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the financing of peace-keeping operations.

It is well known that the cost of peace-keeping operations has grown rapidly in recent years, and this trend is apparently becoming irreversible. At the present time, the arrears of Belarus for financing peace-keeping operations have reached US$ 42,859,861. This has created a situation where Belarus, giving conditions beyond its control, has become chronically in arrears with regard to its financial obligations towards the United Nations. In those circumstances, Belarus, a Founding Member of the United Nations, appears to be under the

constant threat of the applicability of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations related to the loss of voting rights in the General Assembly.

In its decisions 48/472 and 49/470, the General Assembly formally acknowledged the existence of the Belarus problem in the scale of assessments for financing peace-keeping operations. Thus, General Assembly decision 49/470 states that it is necessary to consider, as an exceptional measure, any arrears of Belarus and Ukraine as at 1 January 1995 and for 1995 in the financing of peace-keeping operations as being due to conditions beyond their control and, accordingly, that the question of applicability of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations related to the loss of voting rights in the General Assembly in this respect would not arise.

In the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, Belarus faces a specific and urgent problem, given the discrepancy between its rate of assessment and its capacity to pay.

As do many Member States, Belarus firmly believes that a comprehensive reform of the scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations should be carried out as soon as possible. We understand, however, that a reform of the scale of assessments might become a difficult and protracted endeavour. In these circumstances, Belarus has already become and will continue to be "a hostage" to the solution of the problem, since it is unable, for reasons beyond its control, to pay its rapidly growing indebtedness for the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

At present Belarus is in a more favourable situation, following the voluntary decision of Portugal to relocate to group (b) in the composition of the groups for the apportionment of the cost of peace-keeping operations. The contributions of Belarus and Portugal to the United Nations regular budget are at a roughly similar level and in 1977 will accordingly be 0.28 per cent. In this context we ask Member States to support the relocation of Belarus to group (c) during the resumed forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The proposed relocation of Belarus to group (c) will have no financial implications for the United Nations membership, including permanent members of the Security Council, and might be an incentive for countries with higher national income to relocate to group (b).

Belarus will continue to support a reform of the United Nations regular budget scale of assessments and the peace-keeping operations financing budget on the capacity-to-pay principle.

Belarus believes that favourable consideration and resolution of this issue would reflect goodwill on the part of Member States and their commitment to solve the problems emerging in the functioning of the Organization on the basis of objectivity and fairness. It would also make it possible for Belarus to fulfil its financial obligations in relation to peace-keeping operations.